THOMAS COUNTY CAT.

JOSEPH A. GILL, Editor.

COLBY - - - - - - KANSAS

THE GENIUS OF THE BOTTLE.

There's a queer little bottle stands here on my desk,
It is shaped like a boat and is quite picturesque,
With a figure-head just the least trifle grotesque.

It holds in its depths, though you never may know it,
And I may not wholly be able to show it,
The treasures of romancer, pandit and poet.

There are staid, sober facts for the solemn and wise,
And fables for those who like truth in disguise;
There are sweet dreams and fancies that point to the skies.

There are songs that are sweet as the voice of the lark,
There are jests that belong to the days of the ark,
There are arrows of wit that fly straight to the mark;

And tales of devotion, of honor and truth,
And stories of danger and beauty and ruth,
That quicken the pulse in the bosom of youth.

There are truths that flash out like a sword in the fight,
That shine like a star in the darkness of night,
To guide straying feet from the wrong to the right.

There are sweet psalms of faith, full many I ween,
And solace for sorrow, and praises serene,
And glad songs of strength whereon weakness may lean.

All this in the bottle, although I can't prove it,
And the Genius stands there in his glory above it,
This strange little bottle. Ah, me! how I love it!

And whatever he gives of its marvelous store,
With pride that is humble I bring to your door,
And grateful and happy I pray evermore.

O Genius that stands on this strange bottle's brink,
O aid me forever and ever to link
My heart to the world in this bottle of ink!

—*Carlotta Perry, in Pioneer-Press.*

WILD HORSES.

Immense Herds of These Animals in Former Years.

A Remarkable Duel Between Two Stallions—The Ugly and Dangerous "Rogue"—Stampedes—A Lucky Capture.

In 1851, when I first saw the Rio Pecos river, which is the right-hand branch of the Rio. Grande, the Pecos plains were a favorite grazing ground for vast herds of wild horses. For years later there were plenty of wild ponies on the Western plains, but in the days of which I write there were herds of good big horses, some of the animals standing seventeen hands high and weighing thirteen hundred or fourteen hundred pounds. I went into New Mexico with a Government surveying party, which was of semi-military character. A survey of that portion of the Rio Pecos lying in New Mexico was to be made, and there was to be a military post located between Pope's Wells and the Benita river. The country between was a plain one hundred miles long by two hundred broad, with many small streams and rich feeding spots. The herds of horses had been seldom disturbed by white hunters, and whenever the Indians wanted a supply they selected the ponies in preference, believing that they were the soonest broken and would stand the hardest riding.

We were well into the plains before we saw any horses, and the first herd we saw came very near bringing about a calamity. We were encamped in a bend of the Pecos, and the surveyors and guards had just come in for dinner. There was a truce between the whites and the Indians at that date, but our party was a strong one, and the surveyors never went out without protection. A truce meant that the redskins would not kill if the other party was the stronger. We had two ambulances, three or four wagons, and from seventy to eighty horses. These last were staked out on the rich feeding ground. With no more warning than that we felt a trembling of the earth and heard a great clatter, a drove of wild horses numbering at least five hundred came charging around a heavily wooded point directly at our camp. The stream in front of our camp was about two feet deep and ran over a bed of gravel, and the horses were probably in the habit of coming here to drink. The herd was led by a sorrel stallion of magnificent look and limb, and was going at such a pace that the leaders were among our animals before a man of us moved. Nothing will rattle a domestic horse like the near presence of his wild brother. A stampede of buffaloes simply terrifies him, and in his terror he will act like a fool. The wild horse excites him and makes him forget for the moment that he is man's slave, and he will do his very best to throw off the yoke of servitude and join the herd.

It was well we were all together. Every man rushed for the horses, yelling and shouting to drive the intruders away, but when they went two of our mules and a horse went with them. The horse was a five year old stallion, worth at least five hundred dollars, and his flight created instant dismay in the camp. The mules would not be allowed to "chum" with the herd anyhow, and could be picked up after they had tired their legs a little, but the horse might never be seen again. A score of us mounted in hot haste and set off to recapture him. The herd had gone due west, in which direction a rise of ground hid them after a short run. As we reached this rise every man of us checked his horse. Below us was an almost circular valley about half a mile across, and in this valley the herd had come to a halt. It seemed that the presence of our horse had aroused the ire of the sorrel leader of the herd, and that the question of championship had come up to be settled at once. The two stallions were between us and the herd, and were already skirmishing. Every one of the horses had his head toward the pair, and was an interesting spectator. At any other time our presence would have put them to flight, but under the circumstances they gave us no attention.

Now occurred a combat the like of which few men have ever witnessed. The horses were pretty evenly matched for size. Our champion had an advantage in being shod, but to offset this the sorrel was the quicker. Their movements showed the broad disparity between wild and domestic life. Our horse was agile and smart, as the terms go, but the sorrel had the suppleness of a panther. As boxers feint for an opening, so these horses skirmished for an advantage. They approached until their noses almost met, and then reared up with shrill neighs, struck at each other, and came down to wheel and kick. The iron shoes of our horse hit nothing but air, but we heard the double thud of the sorrel's hind feet as he sent them home. They ran off to wheel and come together again and repeat the same tactics, and again our horse got the worst of it. He was a headstrong, high-strung beast, and his temper was now up. When he wheeled the third time he came back with a rush, screaming out in his anger. The sorrel turned end for end like a flash to use his heels, but our champion dodged the kicks and seized him by the shoulder with his teeth. There was a terrific struggle before the hold was broken, and then they backed into each other and kicked with all fury for a few seconds. Every hoof hit something solid, but the iron shoes of our horse scored a point in his favor. When they separated we could see that the sorrel had been badly used, especially about the legs.

When the horses wheeled for the third time, both were bent on mischief. As they came together they reared up like dogs and struck at each other, and for five minutes they were scarcely off their hind feet. Some hard blows were exchanged, and our horse had the best of the round. Indeed, when the sorrel wheeled and ran away he had his head down and he seemed to acknowledge defeat. He ran off about twenty rods before wheeling, and as he stood for a moment I looked at him through a field-glass which one of the men handed me. His ears lay flat, his eyes looked bloodshot, and there was bloody foam on his lips. He had been severely handled, but was by no means defeated. Indeed, he had run away for the moment to adopt new tactics. When he moved up again he was the picture of ferocity. He came at full speed, reared, and struck right and left, and the second blow knocked our horse flat on the ground. It was a knock-out blow. The victor stood over him for a moment, watching for a movement, but as none was made he joined the herd, and all went off at a gallop. It was five minutes before our horse staggered to his feet, and he wanted no more fighting. He had three bad bites about the shoulders, and his legs were skinned in a dozen places, and it was a week before he got his spirit back.

Two or three times during the next ten days I saw lone wild horses, and one of the old hunters with us was asked for an explanation. He said they were "rogues"—stallions which had been driven from the herd in disgrace—and that they were always considered ugly and dangerous. He had known of them attacking a single horseman, but the presence of a large party like ours would of course frighten them off. Two days after this explanation we were strung out for three miles along the river, on the march and survey. Something was lost by an officer, and one of the troopers was sent back to recover it. Ten minutes later the article supposed to be lost was found in one of the ambulances, and I was sent back to notify the trooper. He had galloped back to camp, a distance of two miles, and was searching around on foot when I arrived in sight. I was about to fire a shot to attract his attention, when from the cottonwood grove beyond the camp a horse came charging out. He was a "rogue," and bent on mischief. The soldier's horse was grazing, and the soldier had his eyes on the ground, and I was so astonished by the sudden charge of the rogue that I made no move to stop him or to warn the trooper. Indeed, a warning could have hardly reached him in time. His back was to the approaching horse, and the rogue seized him in his teeth by a hold between the shoulders and dragged him twenty rods before flinging him to one side. Then he started for the cavalry horse, which stood with head up facing him, and I got my revolver out and spurred forward.

I was yet a quarter of a mile away when the rogue reached his second victim. He ran at full speed, with ears back and lips parted to show his teeth, and the sight was too much for the domestic animal. He was on the point of turning to fly when the other collided with him. It was as if a locomotive had struck him. He went down in a heap and rolled over and over four or five times before he brought up, while the rogue took a half circle to bear down upon the trooper again. The man was on his feet and limping off, but he would have been a goner had I been farther away. I rode across the rogue's path and opened fire on him, and after shaking his head in an ugly way he galloped into the grove and disappeared. The trooper's horse did not seem to have suffered any by the shock, but soon after noon laid down and died. The man was actually crying when I rode up to him, although he had taken a hand in several Indian fights and was reputed a brave fellow. The danger had come upon him so suddenly as to overcome his nerves. The horse's teeth had not broken the skin through his thick clothing, and he did not have a bruise to show, but such was the sudden shock that he was on the sick list for two weeks.

We were within two days' ride of the Bonita, and had been in camp two or three days, when one of the hunters rode in just before dark with some game and announced that a herd of at least fifteen hundred wild horses were grazing about three miles east of us. This was on the opposite side of the Pecos, which just here spread out over a rocky ledge, and was two hundred feet wide and about a foot deep. Below our camp was an old grove with many dead trees in it. It was here we got our wood. In all other directions the ground was open. We had about twelve tents in camp, aside from the wagons and ambulances. The best feeding ground was west of the camp, and all the animals were staked out there. Outside of the bunch of animals was a guard of two soldiers, and two more were between the animals and the wagons. There was no danger apprehended from the Indians, and the guard was set to keep prowling wolves out of camp and to assist any horse which might get tangled in his lariat. It had been a hot day, with "thunder heads" showing in the sky, but when the sun went down the sky was perfectly clear and all signs pointed to a quiet night.

It was midnight, when the sharpest flash of lightning I ever saw, followed by such a crash of thunder as made the earth groan, tumbled every sleeper in camp out of his blankets. I say the sharpest flash I ever saw, for I was awake in time to see the most of it. It was so fierce that it seemed to burn our eyelids. I was hardly on my feet before there came another, followed by another roar. I knew it was going to rain great guns, and I jumped into my trousers and boots, and grabbed up the rest of my clothes and made for a wagon only a few feet away. The two wagons were close to each other, but the forward ends pulled away so that the vehicles formed a V. While the space between the off hind wheel of one and the nigh hind wheel of the other was not over a foot, the space between the tongues was six or eight. The sky was black as I rushed out of the tent, and all the camp fires had burned low. I flung my clothes into one of the wagons, and then hurried back and got weapons and some other articles, and during this time the heavens seemed aflame and the earth fairly rocked.

Men were shouting, horses neighing, and the din was awful, but as I reached the wagon the second time there came a sound to drown all others. It was a steady roar like the rush of great waves, and it grew louder all the time. I could not understand it for two or three minutes. The noise came from the west, and I stood upon the wagon so that I could overlook the tents. A flash of lightning was followed by a moment of pitch darkness, and then came a long, tremulous flash, lasting three or four seconds. By its light I caught sight of the herd of wild horses bearing down upon us in a mad mob, and just as the lightning ceased they entered the stream.

The splash of the waters had the sound of breakers, and though I shouted a warning at the top of my voice no one could have heard me twenty feet away. Next moment that terror-stricken herd was in camp, while the clouds opened and the rain came down in torrents. I scrambled back into the wagon, and what I saw during the next ten minutes can never be forgotten. The frightened horses leaped over the tents, or ran against them, fell over guy ropes, bumped against the wagons, and made clean leaps over the ambulances, and all the time each one kept up a wild neighing. I heard our own animals plunging and rearing and neighing, but knew that we were helpless to prevent the stampede.

As the first of the herd got through our camp to the wagons, two of them entered the V-shaped space, and others kept them crowded in there. The lightning was flashing and the thunder roaring again, and the poor beasts were appalled at the situation. There were four or five lassoes and a dozen spare lariats in my wagon, and when I saw that the entrapped horses were making no move to get out I picked up a noosed rope, lifted the side cover of the wagon, and had the noose over the head of one in three seconds. The one behind him tried to turn when I sought to noose him, but hit his heels against something and twisted back toward me until my hand touched his nose as I slipped the noose over. Then I made the other ends fast, got out the lassoes, and, standing on the front of the wagon, I noosed three horses inside of five minutes. It was no trick at all, for they were pressed right up to the wagon by the weight of those behind, and the awful war of the elements tamed them.

The herd was ten minutes working through the camp, and as they cleared it they took away every horse and mule that we had. Every tent was prostrated, much of our provisions and ammunition destroyed, and one ambulance smashed to pieces. One man was killed and three were injured by the rush of horses. As an offset a wagoner had lassoed two, I had five, and two more had hobbled themselves with tent ropes. In the course of a day we got all our animals back but one old mule, a[nd] ... damages. Our ... finest wild hor[ses] ... plains. My lot i... and I sold on... with the noose... two hundred d[ollars] ... kept until our re... them a little eve... one thousand do[llars]... The span of stallions went to ... after a bit, and one of them proved himself the fastest trotter of that decade.—*N. Y. Sun.*

SHOOTING STARS.

Some of the Certain Facts Known with Regard to Them.

1. They are vastly more numerous than any one has an idea of who has not watched them continuously for many nights. Astronomers who have kept a record for many years assure us that the average number seen by one observer at one place on a clear moonless night is fourteen per hour, which is shown by calculation to be equivalent to 20,000,000 daily for the whole earth. 2. They are not terrestrial phenomena moving in the lower atmosphere, but celestial bodies moving in orbits and with velocities comparable to those of planets and comets. Their velocities are seldom under ten miles a second or over fifty, and average about thirty, the velocity of the earth in its orbit round the sun being eighteen. 3. They are of various composition, comprising both a large majority of smaller particles which are set on fire by the resistance of the earth's atmosphere and entirely burned up and resolved into vapor long before they reach its surface, and a few larger ones, known as meteors, which are only partly fused or glazed by heat, and reach the earth in the form of stony masses. 4. They are not uniformly distributed through space, but collect in meteoric swarms or streams, two at least of which revolve around the sun in closed rings which are intersected by the earth's orbit, causing the magnificent display of shooting stars which are seen in August and November. 5. They are connected with comets, it having been demonstrated by Schiaparelli that the orbit of the comet of 1066 is identical with the August swarm of meteors known as the Perseids, and connections between comets and meteor streams have been found in at least three other cases. The fact is generally believed that comets are nothing but a condensation of meteorites rendered incandescent by the heat generated by their mutual collision when brought into close proximity. 6. Their composition, as inferred from the larger meteors which reach the earth, is identical, or nearly so, with that of matter brought up from great depths by volcanic eruptions. In each case they consist of two classes—one composed mainly of native iron alloyed with nickel, the other of stony matter, consisting mainly of compounds of silicon and magnesium. Most meteorites consist of compounds of the two classes, in which the stony parts seem to have broken into fragments by violent collision and becoming imbedded in iron which has been fused by heat into a plastic or pasty condition.—*Contemporary Review.*

Utilizing California Woods.

Some of the natural woods of California and Oregon are coming into extensive use, both at home and abroad, for interior finish, the most valuable for this purpose being the redwood, the white cedar, the laurel and the sycamore. The redwood takes the lead in this line, taking a good polish, and, for general use, wear and staying qualities, is alleged to have no superior in any forest in the world. The laurel is smooth, firm, beautifully figured, and altogether a most desirable wood. The value of the sycamore as an ornamental wood has only quite recently become generally known, its grain being much like that of the eastern birch, having waving lines close together, and, as it is quite tough and strong, it possesses superior value for veneering. The Oregon ash is of beauty and utility for decorative purposes, is figured with concentric curves, and allows an attractive polish. The maple of that State is also of beautiful appearance, light yellow in collor, and a surface covered with small, wavy lines, of especial beauty in the gaslight.—*N. Y. Sun.*

When to Plow Sandy Soil.

My experience has shown me that it is a great mistake to tear up sand late in spring and plant seeds in it in a raw, lifeless condition. I have fifty acres of sandy and gravely soil on my farm in Ohio, and this I always plowed first in the spring, often in the winter; and I believe now it would have been good policy to have turned it over the fall before. If plowed late in the spring, only a few weeks before planting, it seemed devitalized—no life in it; the corn came up weak, and yellow and slow. There was no sweetness of the sun in it. But if plowed the winter before, the frost-spurs cracked and lifted the surface, opened it to the sun through March and April, and the increasing warmth of the season gave it life and spring. There seemed to be no nitrogen in the frost. But the best of all was the ripening and enlivening of the sand by the sun.—*Country Gentleman.*

—Old lady (sharply to boy in drug store)—"I've been waitin' for some time to be waited on, boy." Boy (meekly)—"Yes'um; wot kin I do fer you?" Old lady—"I want a two-cent stamp." Boy (anxious to please)—"Yes'um. Will you have it licked?"—*Golden Days.*

COL... Boo...

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... Rider Haggard's ... to be the Queen of ... with whom England has ... pleted a treaty.

...nie Louise Cary-Raymond occasionally sings in the quartette choir in Dr. Paxton's church in New York. This is the only public singing she has done since her marriage.

—A memorial to Helen Hunt Jackson will be the Ramona Indian Girls' School at Santa Fe, N. M. The building will cost $30,000, and will accommodate 150 pupils.

—The name of Grant is inscribed on a great many American vessels. Nearly a dozen ships are called after Andrew Johnson. Three boats bear Ben Butler's name, while five use the name of Winfield S. Hancock. General McClellan has eight vessels named for him. Robert E. Lee three and Jeff Davis one.

—Many of the leading statesmen are good French scholars, and some of them have a critical knowledge of the languages. Senator Edmunds and Senator Hoar have their libraries well stocked with works in French, and the most attractive means of recreation which Thurman can find is to devour French novels by the dozen. John Sherman has many French financial books in his library.

—Although Miss Louisa M. Alcott lives in that town of literary inspiration, Concord, Mass., she does most of her writing in Boston. There she takes a room where she can be perfectly retired and quiet, and with a bottle of ink by her side and a lap tablet on her knee she writes until her task is done. She says that there is something in the east winds of Boston that stimulates her brain.

—August Maquet, the French novelist and dramatist who died recently, was a partner of the original "house of Dumas & Co.," and wrote considerable parts of some of the novels which gave Alexandre the Great his reputation. Among these are "Monte Cristo," "Les Trois Mousquetaires," "Le Vicomte de Brageloune" and others less famous, of which Dumas, their ostensible author, used to say, when asked questions concerning them: "I hear they are interesting, but I haven't read them yet."

—A new and interesting anecdote of Daniel Webster is told by a correspondent of the *Magazine of American History*. The night after Webster lost the nomination for President he was serenaded by some friends in Washington. For a time there was no sign of life about the house, but finally a second-story window was raised and Webster appeared in his night clothes. He rested his hands on the window sill, and after the cheering ceased, spoke in a clear, sad tone. His closing words were these: "Boys, I am glad to see you; but this is the last time you will hear my voice. I am going to my home, and I feel that I am going to my home to die." A few months later he died at his home in Marshfield.

HUMOROUS.

—There is only one pin a day made for each inhabitant of the United States, and whoever uses more than that allowance becomes a monopolist.—*Lowell Citizen.*

—"I 'clar', Mr. Shookum, 'f I didn't forgit to ax yo' to take off yo' hat! I'm actually gittin dat absen'-minded I hain't got common perliteness no mo'!"—*Harper's Bazar.*

—Father—"What do you think of a boy that throws a banana skin on the sidewalk?" Son—"I don't know. What do you think of a banana skin that throws a man on the sidewalk?"—*Life.*

—Minister (dining with the family)—"You were a nice little boy in church this morning, Bobby. I noticed you kept very quiet and still." Bobby—"Yes, sir,. I was afraid of waking pa up."—*N. Y. Sun.*

—A fashion paper shows that the newspaper raid on the high-hat nuisance has been so effective that the newest fashion in female headgear is only about six inches higher than formerly.—*Norristown Herald.*

—Said Brown: "The day I was married I quit chewing tobacco, and I tell you it was pretty hard on me that day, but in a day or two I was all right." "Ah, how's that?" "I commenced chewing again."—*Texas Siftings.*

—Mr. Agile (to Mr. Stoutman, after a hard run for a horse-car)—"By Jove, old boy, I thought you were too lazy to run like that." Mr. Stoutman (languidly)—"Easily explained, my dear boy; laziness runs in our family."—*Detroit Free Press.*

—"Mamma, what is color-blind?" asked little Nell. "Inability to tell one color from another, my dear." "Then I guess the man that made my geography is color-blind, because he's got Greenland painted down yellow."—*Our Young People.*

—Countryman (to hotel clerk)—"I reckon you'll have to give me another room, mister." Clerk—"What's the matter with the one you have?" Countryman—"The sign says 'Don't blow out the gas,' an' b'gosh, I can't sleep with all that light in the room."—*N. Y. Sun.*

—"I have just learned," said Mrs. Bipper, looking up from the paper, "that the inventor of the Gatling gun is a doctor." "Yes," replied Bipper, "and he is still engaged in professional work." "Is he?" "Yes. A gun he has just invented will kill a thousand persons a minute."—*Kansas City Times.*